

Cooperative Assessment Project

A partnership with industry to restore natural resources injured by chronic releases of hazardous substances or oil.

Overview

NOAA is developing a partnership, the Cooperative Assessment Project (CAP), to promote participation between industry and government in restoring natural resources injured by hazardous substance releases or oil spills. CAP focuses primarily on sites affected by chronic hazardous substance or oil contamination where industry and government are willing to productively engage in cooperative natural resource damage assessments (NRDAs). CAP's focus is on sites where there is potential NRDA liability under CERCLA, OPA, RCRA, or other appropriate regimes, including federal and state-lead sites as well as sites included and not included on the National Priorities List (NPL).

CAP provides incentives for industry with pollution liability to assume responsibility for restoring natural resources. CAP offers industry a greater voice and more control over the timing of restoration actions without undermining the natural resource trustee responsibilities of government agencies. Industry partners may also benefit from reduced damage assessment costs and reduced risk of litigation.

NOAA envisions that CAP will expedite the restoration of injured natural resources and associated services, and encourage innovative approaches to the NRDA process. CAP should also strengthen partnerships with industry and other stakeholders, and provide meaningful public involvement opportunities.



Working cooperatively, NOAA, co-trustees and Texaco replanted salt marsh after a pipeline leaked 200,000 gallons of oil in Louisiana.



How CAP Developed

The development of CAP responds to industry requests for increased involvement and flexibility in natural resource damage assessment and restoration efforts. This approach evolved out of the NRDA regulations requiring parties responsible for hazardous substance releases or oil spills to be invited to participate in such activities.

NOAA explored the development of CAP by convening five meetings during 2001 with industry representatives, environmental groups, and federal, state, and tribal trustees. Great interest and support led to the formation of a broad-based work group, with members nominated by their respective stakeholder communities. The work group is committed to the development of practical ideas and options for CAP.

How You Can Help

NOAA continues to provide a forum for productive discussions to enhance CAP through the web site and interaction with work group members. NOAA hopes to build on its experience and serve as a clearinghouse for lessons learned in past NRDAs, while also exploring novel ways to conduct new cooperative damage assessments. Specifically, NOAA encourages the public to suggest ideas to improve CAP and sites at which CAP could be applied.

NOAA acts on behalf of the public to restore coastal and marine resources injured by oil spills and hazardous substances.
To learn more, please contact—

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